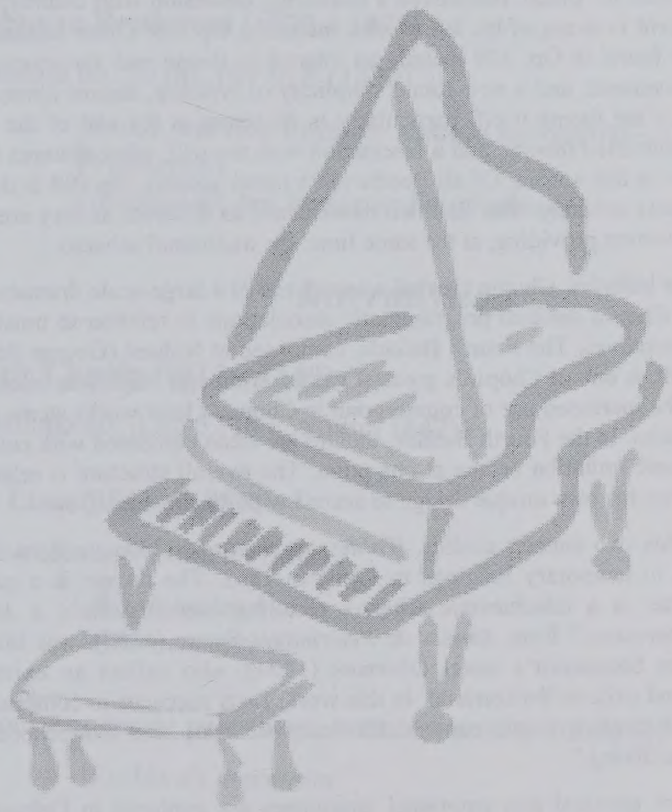
Solo Piano Recital

by

Michelle Marie Santiago



Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building
University of Alberta

Saturday, May 12, 2001
at 8:00 o'clock in the evening

Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin all became more interested in counterpoint near the end of their creative lives, and the later works of these three composers reveal different methods of integrating counterpoint with their own harmonic and formal languages. Mozart became familiar with the works of Bach and Händel through his friendship with Baron von Swieten, and in much of Mozart's music of the late 1780s there is an attempt to combine counterpoint in the style of Bach with classical form. The Piano Sonata in D major, K576 (Mozart's last), was composed in 1789, the year of his trip to Leipzig. The influence of Bach on Mozart is clearly revealed in this work. The secondary material of both the first and third movements is contrapuntally derived from the primary material. Contrapuntal techniques are also used in the development and recapitulation of the first movement.

Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E major, Op.109 (1820) is the first of a trilogy (Opp. 109, 110, and 111), his last sonatas for piano. Beethoven's increasing obsession with counterpoint, and the fugue in particular, is apparent in many of his late works, including Op.109. Other hallmarks of Beethoven's late style that can be found in Op. 109 include an interest in theme and variations, such as those that make up the third movement, and a new-found simplicity of lyricism, almost hymn-like in expression, which can be heard in the theme itself, particularly in its return at the end of the movement. Abrupt changes of sharply contrasted moods, and a fascination with the trill, other features of Beethoven's late style, are also present in this sonata. Of all Beethoven's piano sonatas, Op.109 is the furthest removed from the classical sonata structure. The first two movements, as different as they are, are both in sonata form, the second movement providing, at the same time, the traditional scherzo.

With his four ballades, Chopin created a new genre of a large-scale dramatic work that follows a narrative structure. Chopin disliked programmatic associations in relation to music, and the ballades are strictly musical narratives. The Fourth Ballade, composed at Nohant (George Sand's manor house) in the summer of 1842, is one of Chopin's greatest works. Although Bach was (along with Mozart) his favourite composer, the increased use of counterpoint in Chopin's later works stems partly from a study of a treatise by Cherubini. In the Fourth Ballade, themes are often combined with counter-melodies, and a striking use of canonic imitation occurs at one point. The overall structure is related to sonata form, though Chopin develops his own unique design to accord with the dramatic flow.

Liszt wrote his two concert studies, *Waldesrauschen* and *Gnomenreigen*, on a small upright piano while he lived in temporary lodgings in Rome in 1862. The former is a gossamer portrait of nature, while the latter is a mischievous scherzo, recalling Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. "Vallée d'Obermann," from *Années de Pèlerinage: Suisse* (1852), was inspired by the main character of Pivert de Senancour's novel *Oberman* (1804), who suffers an existential crisis while enduring a self-imposed exile in Switzerland. In this work, Liszt succeeds in combining the demands of musical structure with explicit poetic content. He described it as "the monochord of the inexorable loneliness of human suffering."

Very different physical and emotional landscapes are explored in Debussy's *L'isle joyeuse* (1903–4). Inspired by Watteau's painting "L'Embarquement pour Cythère," and composed as a memoir of a holiday he took in the summer of 1903 with his soon-to-be second wife, Emma Bardac, this piece is one of Debussy's most extrovert. The pianistic style follows in the tradition of Chopin and Liszt; the composer wrote that it "seems to embrace every possible manner of treating the piano, combining as it does strength with grace."

Programme

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Sonata in D, KV 576, "Trumpet Sonata" (1789)

Allegro
Adagio
Allegretto

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Sonata no. 30 op. 109 in E (1820)

Vivace, ma non troppo – Adagio espressivo – Tempo I
Prestissimo
Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung

Intermission

Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849)

Ballade no. 4 op 52 in F minor (1842)

Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886)

Zwei Konzertetüden (1862)

"Waldesrauschen"
"Gnomenreigen"

from Années de pèlerinage, première année, Suisse (1852)

"Vallée d'Obermann"

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

L'isle joyeuse (1903-1904)

This recital is lovingly dedicated to the memory of
Dr. Ernesto B. Lejano (1933 – 2000).

Michelle Marie Santiago

Michelle Marie Santiago was born in Edmonton in 1982 and began her music studies at the Alberta College Conservatory of Music (Early Childhood Program) in 1984. She was accepted into the piano studio of Dr. Ernesto Lejano in 1993 and studied with him until his recent passing. Michelle received a piano performer's ARCT in 1998 and has completed the second year of a Bachelor of Music degree at the Department of Music, University of Alberta. She studies piano with Dr. Jacques Després.

Michelle won the University Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition in 1999 and was the featured soloist at Music Makers II at the Winspear Centre for Music.

Winning numerous prizes and scholarships at the Edmonton Kiwanis Music Festival, Michelle had the honor of representing Edmonton at the 1997 and 1999 Alberta Music Festivals and also represented Alberta at the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association National Piano Competition in 1999. This summer she will again be participating in both competitions.

Michelle has appeared in various recitals and performances at the Francis Winspear Centre for Music, Eckhardt-Gramatte Hall in Calgary, Alberta Government House, Edmonton City Hall, Alberta College Muttart Hall, Grande Prairie Regional College Performing Arts Recital Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and at the Eastman Piano Festival and International Piano Competition for Young Artists in Rochester, N.Y.

This summer, Michelle will return to the Aspen School of Music to study with John Perry.

Michelle is a recipient of numerous scholarships including Beryl Barns Memorial Undergraduate Awards, a William and Mary Hawrysh Memorial Leadership Scholarship, Universiade '83 scholarships, a Faculty of Arts Achievement Award, a Bessie Brooks Winspear Scholarship, a Peace River Pioneer Memorial Scholarship in Music, Aspen Music School scholarships and a study grant from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

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